

469 Quincy St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Aug. 19, 1937

My dear Mr. Allison,

Last night I saw your play. Harold Jackson had spoken to me of its power and competence some time ago. All he said of it seemed to me quite, quite true.

When the curtain rang down on those last lines of Carrie, it rang down on the finest play, written by a negro I have yet seen.

I liked especially the sharp, pared dialogue, the unusual treatment of an unusual theme of Negro life, the swift, sure characterizations.

Of course it is not always true that a playwright must have a "chorus" character. And I may be wrong in selecting any of your character's attitudes as your attitude. Yet I couldn't help thinking that you as well as Carrie, damned those for the black in our race. I couldn't help feeling that that last line was, part at least, of yours there.

cry of Carries for a general
Negro cry, if Negroes took
this cry of Carries for the
cry within themselves.

I do not object to truth.
I object to certain attitudes
toward it.

Tell Carries this: tell all
Carries this:

Learn to regret dark pigments of the skin,
the tightness of the hair, the small jaw;
each flower holds its petals deep within
and beauty blooms where darkness slept
before.

The black negative ^{medalled} ~~meat~~ with the dance,
the independent spiraling up to ecstasy,
and passion ^{medalled} ~~with~~ ^{extraneous} ~~extraneous~~.
There are hips with glamour certainly,
breasts the black of the saxophone,
the trumpet music mental and shrill,
hips a bitter prostitution alone.

The music blossomed under jungle
stars re-echoes still.

Recalling night splendors we forget
when darkness looks on darkness
with regret.

Very sincerely yours,
Owen Dodson

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I hope I am wrong in feeling
this, but so many wounds
point to that mark.

Like as the play is, the
theme, which is rather
important in "The Trust of Dr. Beck",
falls short of significance, of
power, of love for a black
race. I do not question the
validity of Dr. Beck's and Carries'
characters, I object to your
attitude towards their char-
acters. The theme, as I see it,
does not run horizontally
with the high ideal you set
for your play in the opening
sequences.

Again I say: I hope I
am being altered by my
imagination and not by your
words.

It would be a pity to leave
any audience with so bitter,
so arid a theme, so hopeless
a situation, so false a
sentiment. It would be a pity
if America heard this